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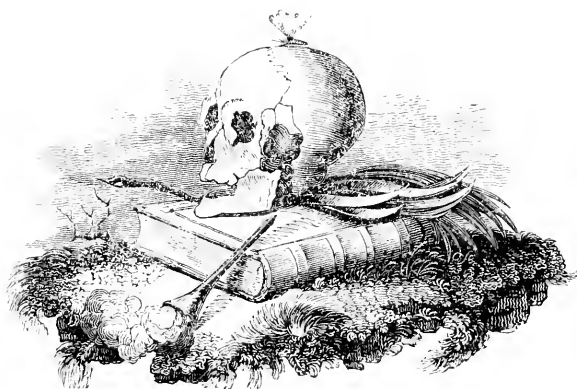
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VISION OF DEATH:

P. 1. 1/1/19. 1839.

A POEM.

BY C. W. EVEREST.



HARTFORD:

CANFIELD AND ROBINS.

M D C C X X V I I

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THE following Poem was delivered at the WASHINGTON COLLEGE JUNIOR EXERCISES, at Christ Church, on Wednesday evening, the 2d of August last. It was not written with a view to public delivery, nor delivered with a view to immediate publication. But the flattering reception which it met, on the evening of its delivery, together with the solicitation of friends, has induced its present appearance. This will doubtless be deemed by most a sufficient apology. At least, the writer will be satisfied to have exposed his article—though in many points faulty—to the various criticism, perchance *censure*, it must necessarily, from its publicity, elicit, if he can reflect that the labor of his brain has been turned to good account into his pocket.

Truly the public's obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Hartford, Sept. 4, 1837.

VISION OF DEATH.

I.

Go, DEATH, TO THY MISSION!—the mandate was given,
And the echo rolled back through the chambers of
Heaven :

'Then faint in the distance its mutterings grew,
And a being of horror came forth to my view !
He seemed as commissioned for terrible deeds,
For dark was his chariot, and pale were his steeds ;
One hand grasped a sceptre, the other a dart,
And the glow of his eye told the pride of his heart ;
The Sun, at his glance, shed a sicklier ray,
And Nature, astonished, in fear shrunk away ;
'The heavens grew black at his pestilent breath,
And owned him the monarch invincible—DEATH !

He cast a proud glance over Earth's happy throng,
And breathed to the Nations his horrible song :

1

“ I am lord of the Earth—I am lord of the Main—
All Nature I hold in my withering chain :
From my shadowy realm, in the chambers of night,
I will come on my pathway of mildew and blight :
The surest destruction 'tis mine to impart—
My arrow shall pierce to the manliest heart;
I will shroud man's proud hopes in the darkness of
 gloom,
And bear him from all that he loves, to the tomb !

2

“ I will spare neither innocence, virtue, nor truth—
The aged, the manly, nor childhood, nor youth :
The monarch will find that no sceptre can save—
The beggar must go with me down to the grave :
The sad and forlorn, with the happy and gay,
Must leave all behind them, and hasten away :
Man alike is my prey, nor shall favor be shown—
I will give each an arrow, a pall, and a stone !

3

“The being, who, sporting in infancy’s morn,
Is amused with Life’s rose, but espies not its thorn,
I will mark—and my dart shall in pity be hurled,
To bear him away from a cold-hearted world !
It were best that he drink not too deeply of Life—
He would turn with disgust from its fountains of
 strife :
In the grave’s quiet gloom shall he rest from its
 woes,
Nor Earth’s saddening conflict disturb his repose !

4

“I will visit the couch of the mother’s first-born,
And the mother, despairing, shall sorrow forlorn :
I will tear the fond wife from her little-ones’ clasp,
She must come at my call—she must shrink from
 their grasp :
The father, though dear to the group of his heart,
From his wife and his infants for ever must part :
In the hall of affection my banner shall wave—
I am lord of the Earth—I am lord of the Grave !

5

“ I will visit the maid, in her jessamine bower,
When she waits for her lover to come at the hour :
He will come—but to find I have laid her at rest,
And cold is the heart that beat warm in her breast!
I will visit the bride, when arrayed for the groom,
And bid her prepare to descend to the tomb :
At my withering touch all her roses shall fade,
And the couch of the bridal a bier shall be made !

6

“ I will sever the pair at the altar united—
The joys of connubial bliss must be blighted ;
Though locked in each other's embrace, they shall
part,
Though the absence of one break the other's fond
heart !
I will come to the scene when long-parted ones meet,
And in Friendship's fond pressure delighted shall
greet :
I will tear them apart—they shall ne'er meet again,
Till they meet in a land where no parting gives pain !

7

“ I will visit the sage, when, through night’s lonely
hours,

O’er the lore of past ages devoutly he pores :
He shall cease his pursuits—he must moulder to
dust—

No learning can save—I am true to my trust !
I will come to the dungeon, an angel of peace,
And grant to the captives a joyful release ;
Their chains cannot bind—they will come at my call,
And sorrow no longer shall hold them in thrall !

8

“ I will visit the proud one, exulting in state,
Who shall spurn the poor beggar that kneels at his
gate :

I will humble his might—I will sadden his hall—
And his couch shall be spread with my funeral pall !
I will come to the orphan, despised and rejected—
I will visit the widow, by false friends neglected ;
And the lordlings, who left them in sorrow to sigh,
By conscience affrighted, despairing shall die !

9

“I will curb mad ambition, when wading through
 blood,
And mounting the throne o’er the hearts of the good ;
I will call upon avarice, toiling for dust—
His treasures, forsaken, neglected shall rust :
The scoffer shall start at my coming, and quail,
And the stoutest transgressor turn suddenly pale :
I will conquer oppression and tyranny quell—
But unto the righteous—*it all shall be well !*

10

“I will come to the banqueting-hall, in my power,
When music and beauty alike rule the hour :
The song shall be hushed, and the dancer’s gay
 tread—
For the proud and the joyous shall sleep with the
 dead !
I will follow the hunter, when bounding with speed
He follows the game over valley and mead ;
He shall find that a hunter, with woe in his breath,
Is close on his track—and the hunter is Death !

11

“I will speed to the soldier, at rest on the plain,
And the bugle, at morning, will call him in vain :
He shall sleep in my arms, with no shroud but his
mail,

Nor awake when the war-cry swells loud on the
gale !

Where the cloud of the battle is dark in the air,
And foemen encounter, then look for me there !
The proud, vaunting warrior shall bow at my will—
I will say to the war-horse—*lie down, and be still !*

12

“The sailor, careering on Ocean’s rude wave,
Shall hasten with me to a watery grave ;
I will visit the hammock, and visit the deck—
I will ride on the tempest, and shout in the wreck !
When the storm rages loud, when the breezes are
fair,

And Ocean is calm, I will hasten me there :
On the coral the sailor must sleep, ’neath the surge,
And the murmur of waters his funeral dirge !

13

“I will go where is echoed the bacchanal’s song,
And enter, unseen, with the reveling throng :
Wo! wo! when the red wine by me shall be
 poured—
The lights shall go out round the festival board!
I will visit the gamester’s low hall of despair,
And alas for the lip that shall welcome me there :
The wild curse of horror no more shall be said,
But the blood-gushing bosom be crushed ’neath my
 tread !

14

“I will visit the good man, to sickness a prey,
And bid him prepare for a happier day!
He will not be affrighted, but welcome me on—
He is tired of the world, and he longs to be gone :
He knows I will calm all the woes of his breast,
And bear him away to a mansion of rest :
He will not plead to linger where pleasure is sad,
But will smile at my presence, look up, and be
 glad !

15

“Mortal ! proud mortal ! prepare for my call—
Thou shalt sleep, at the last, 'neath my curtaining
pall !

I will come—the dread herald of wo to the gay—
When the giddy and careless will think me away !
I will come—and the hall shall be shrouded with
gloom,

And arrayed with the emblems of Death and the
tomb !

Be prepared ! that my summons shall cause no
affright—

For my arrow is noiseless—my footstep is light !”

II.

Thus boasted the Monarch, and onward he rode,
To bear his destruction in terror abroad !
His shafts, all unerring, sped fatal and wide,
And the dead and the dying fell thick by his side .
No pity could move him, no terror could stay,
But to Death's silent valley he bore them away !
I viewed with amaze, and was trembling with fear,
When a voice, sweet as mercy, fell soft on my ear :

“ Now turn thy rapt gaze from this picture of blight,
To the visions that dawn on Futurity’s light :”

I turned me with joy from the horrid affray,
And the veil o’er the Future rolled slowly away !
The mists, that o’ershadowed its scenes from my eye,
Curled darkly in clouds to the dim, distant sky :
And quelling my doubts and my harrassing fears,
I gazed down the long, gloomy vista of years !

* * * * *

III.

I looked o’er Creation : where, where was her throng,
So giddy in pleasure—so happy in song ?
Ah ! their glad hearts were stifled, and hushed was
their breath,
For Earth’s countless millions were sleeping in Death !
There were “ heaps upon heaps” of the mangled and
slain—
The tyrant had boasted, nor boasted in vain !
’Twas a horrible scene ; not a breath—not a groan—
And Death, the proud victor, was stalking alone !

He was wearied with slaughter—infirm was his tread—
And he sat him at rest on a heap of his dead!

I looked to the Ocean : 'twas placid and fair—
But Death, with his mildew, had also been there :
'The ships were all riding along to their doom,
For the sailors had gone to their deep ocean-tomb!

IV.

Old Time, fast-expiring, drew tardily nigh—
But his arm was now nerveless, and languid his eye :
“Thou hast come, my last victim, thy sceptre
resign—
And bow thee, in humble submission, to mine !”
And Time came in despair to the Conqueror's seat,
And expired, with a quivering groan, at his feet!

* * * * *

V.

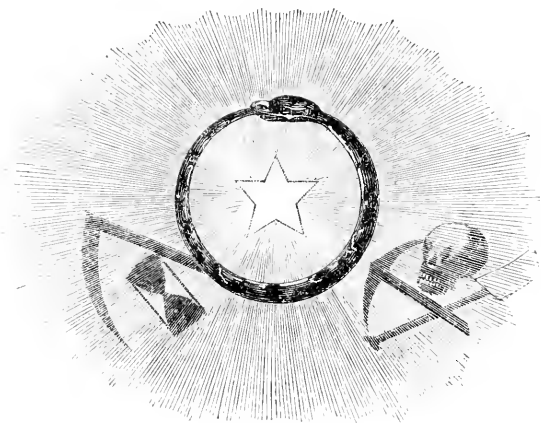
'The thunders rolled off on their final career,
Like the last rending groans of some perishing sphere :

The lightnings sped forth on their terrible track,
And in tempest and terror the curtain rolled back !

* * * * *

VI.

“ Fear not,” said the Spirit, “ his kingdom is o’er—
He shall speak to the awe-stricken mortal no more :
Though dominion o’er Earth to his sceptre was given,
**YET DEATH SHALL NOT ENTER THE PORTALS OF
HEAVEN !**”



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